

state of labor

Labor Committee Ruins Woodcock's IMF Game Plan

STOCKHOLM, July 8 (IPS) — In a fight spearheaded by the Italian delegation at the International Metalworkers Federation conference this weekend, the European metalworkers revolted against the control of Rockefeller's inside man in the labor movement, UAW president Leonard Woodcock. Thirty-nine countries — including every European section of the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) except the West German I. G. Metall — followed the Italians' lead and voted against Woodcock's candidate for General Secretary, Herman Rehban. The international working class won a major victory against the social fascists within its ranks.

Drawing on the expose which the Labor Committees have circulated extensively through both the North American and Western European working class, the Italian delegation led a vigorous assault against the "superficial" fight against the multinationals proposed by the UAW. Exemplary is the speech of the Italian metalworkers leader Martino, who countered the Woodcock proposals for a Nazi labor front which would march workers peacefully into co-participation with the multinationals, and from there to the slave labor camps, with the following passionate plea:

"In this strategy, we must be conscious that if we are to fight against any economic superpowers, fascism and imperialism, it is impossible to keep waving the old flag of cold war. We need to build strong walls against the Right of any kind and open as far as we can the border of class solidarity to the Left. It is necessary to get out of blind political views and open ourselves to the confrontation and common struggle with all sectors of the working class movement.

While they were unable to break the coalition of I. G. Metall, the Japanese metalworkers and the UAW which elected Rehban, the Italian section (the FLM) has joined with the Labor Committees to break Rockefeller's controlled environment. The fact that the metalworkers, the heart of the world's trade union movement, are now actually considering a serious international fight against the multinationals, seriously cripples Rockefeller's plans for a self-destructing labor movement. The FLM itself, according to spokesman Benvenuto, is actively considering leaving the IMF.

Rehban's Sour Victory

While Rehban, the UAW's Secretary for International

Affairs, captured the General Secretary post, and the more or less honorary presidency went uncontested to Eugene Loderer of I.G. Metall, the UAW's victory was thoroughly soured. After campaigning hard for months to sew up his votes, Rehban and his master Woodcock were forced to face open exposure of their complicity with Rockefeller's fascist plans.

There was not a delegate at the 360-person conference who was not aware of how Woodcock has gutted the UAW, pushing U.S. autoworkers into deadly speedup, methadone programs, and suicidal "Apache" strikes. Those who have not been reached by the Labor Committees' propaganda in their home country learned about CIA man Woodcock from a Labor Committee booklet which detailed Woodcock's fascist policies — starting with his support for the resettlement, compulsory brainwashing, and forced relocation of the Mondale post-Watergate legislation in the United States.

The delegates were able to compare Woodcock's phony rhetoric against the oil companies and other multinationals with the programmatic united front attack on Rockefeller centered on instigating and defending an Italian debt moratorium. Woodcock's proposal that investment in the Soviet bloc be eliminated because of its supposed threat to American and Western European jobs was directly countered by the Labor Committees' proposals for expanded trade and political cooperation with the Soviet bloc as the only possible solution to the economic crisis in the West. As a result, the conference heard implicit criticisms of Woodcock's proposals from Italian leaders like Benvenuto and Martino. On the second day of the conference, even the German delegation, which ultimately swung with Woodcock, gave the UAW President's labor front proposals a very cool and noncommittal reception. Woodcock's most embarrassing moment, however, came when he and other IMF "dignitaries" took the scheduled tour to the Saab Scania factory, a model plant for Tavistock co-participation schemes. Tipped off about the tour by some worker contacts in the factory, the Labor Committees had leafletted the Saab workers with a leaflet entitled "Saab-Scania: Laboratory for the Depression." After the leaflet had exposed how Woodcock's endorsement of the "Swedish Way" was preparing them and workers throughout the world for the same treatment the German working class received

under Nazism, Woodcock et al. proceeded with their tour — through an empty factory! He did not dare risk being called a fascist to his face.

The Italian Fight

Throughout the convention it was the Italian delegation which took the offensive for a working class policy. Speaking most strongly for them was Martino, an FLM representative from UIL (the liberal trade union federation). Martino's speech explicitly attacked the glib way in which Woodcock, Rehban and their supporters were playing with the life-and-death issue of the multinational corporations.

In his own motivation of the necessary strategy, Martino detailed how the multinationals rule conditions of economic, political and civilian development in Third World countries — detailing the Chilean coup. "Was it only ITT that plotted the coup of the fascist right?" he asked. He then described how the multinationals control the world's resources — pointing directly at the Seven Sisters.

Most notably, Martino pointed out how "they plot to break the unity and power of political and workers'

organizations and of the trade unions." This understanding directly challenged the strategy put forward by the Woodcock camp — which is essentially the strategy of co-participation and "bargaining" with the multinational corporations, ignoring their union-busting aims and respecting their prerogative to drive production and employment down to the bare bones of a world fascist economy.

The Italian delegation, although split over its willingness to work explicitly with the European Labor Committees, took the gravity of the international class struggle to the entire conference. Their failure to resoundingly defeat Rehban, who was opposed by a Holland delegate named Benedict, came from the strict control exercised by the leadership of the largest delegations — since the vote count was determined on the basis of the unions' membership size. Thirty-nine delegations voted for Benedict while only 30 voted for Rehban. The Italians' failure to press openly and hard for the Italian moratorium and the international united front around industrialization and fusion power reflects their continued submersion to trade union militants — a suicidal pit from which the Labor Committees are determined to raise the angry and increasingly class conscious world working class.